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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2576
INFO RUCNSCO/UNESCO COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 000051

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR IO/UNESCO M. CRISTINA NOVO, IO/PPC RICHARD
WILBUR, AND EB/TPP/MTA LINDSAY CHASON

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SCUL](#) [UNESCO](#) [ETRD](#) [IC](#)

SUBJECT: ICELAND: NEAR-TERM UNESCO CONVENTION RATIFICATION
UNLIKELY

REF: (A) STATE 19851, (B) 05 Reykjavik 415, (C) 05

Reykjavik 431

¶1. Summary: The UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity is not on Iceland's legislative agenda; nor has it attracted Icelandic civil society or media attention. End summary.

¶2. Post can find no reference to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, on the agenda for the Althingi (Icelandic parliament). Queried casually and following other items of business (per ref A instructions), Ministry for Foreign Affairs Head of International Institutions Division Nikulas Hannigan commented that he did not think this was an instrument that Iceland would be in any rush to ratify.

¶3. Post Public Affairs Section searched the files and websites of the country's leading newspapers -- Morgunbladid, Frettabladid and DV -- and found no media coverage of the UNESCO cultural expressions issue. PAS also searched the webpages of Iceland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and of the Icelandic Embassy in France, which represents Iceland in UNESCO, and found no articles or press releases about the UNESCO convention. Based on the apparent lack of interest, PAS believes a PD campaign on the issue would be counterproductive.

¶4. The following information is keyed to the tracking categories provided ref A paragraph 8:

¶I. Legislative agenda

d) not likely to get on those agendas in 2006

II. Media attention

a) no published/broadcast opinion for or against ratification since October

III. Public debate

a) No NGO, university, or other civil society discussions since October

¶5. Comment: As reported refs B and C, Iceland followed the EU lead in signing the Convention while to us cautiously conceding the validity of U.S. criticisms. Given the Government's ambivalence thus illustrated, we may expect no exception in this case to the usual achingly slow Icelandic process of incorporation of treaties into domestic law. End comment.

VAN VOORST